
Director General for Regulation

Mr Paul Allin, CStat, FRSA
Chair, Statistics User Forum
Visiting Professor, Imperial College London
By Email

12 November 2015

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your email of 4 October drawing to the Authority's attention media reporting about alleged delays in the publication of NHS performance monitoring reports. I am sorry about the delay in replying; it has taken some time to explore the issues with the relevant bodies.

Recognising that the relevant performance reports currently fall outside the scope of official statistics, we have discussed with Monitor (which is merging with the Trust Development Authority) the key issues of principle – drawn from the Code of Practice for Official Statistics – which are most germane. These relate to release practices – specifically, that following a pre-announced schedule is helpful in avoiding perceptions that the timing of a publication may be influenced by political considerations; and to integrity – that organisations should take steps to ensure that those producing (statistical) reports are protected from inappropriate pressures.

My letter¹ of 11 November to Helen Buckingham, Monitor's Chief of Staff, raises the question that Monitor might wish to voluntarily commit to these – and potentially other – elements of the Code. The letter also provides a summary of the circumstances of the publication of the report in question.

I was very grateful that you raised this issue with us. I do not underestimate the potential adverse impact on trust in official statistics from perceived problems with the way in which non-statistical information is disseminated. Voluntary compliance with elements of the Code is a good way of enhancing the trustworthiness of all types of information disseminated by statutory bodies like regulators.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Humpherson

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/index.html>